

(LADY PSYCHE enters, and regards them with amazement.)

- HIL. I'faith, the plunge is taken, gentlemen!
For, willy-nilly, we are maidens now,
5 And maids against our will we must remain. (*All laugh heartily.*)
- PSY. (*aside*). These ladies are unseemly in their mirth.
(*The gentlemen see her, and, in confusion, resume their modest demeanour.*)
- FLOR. (*aside*). Here's a catastrophe, Hilarion!
This is my sister! She'll remember me,
10 Though years have passed since she and I have met!
- HIL. (*aside to FLORIAN*) Then make a virtue of necessity
And trust our secret to her gentle care.
- FLOR. (*to PSYCHE, who has watched CYRIL in amazement*).
Psyche! Why, don't you know me? Florian!
- 15 PSY. (*amazed*) Why, Florian!
- FLOR. My sister! (*Embraces her.*)
- PSY. Oh, my dear!
What are you doing here – and who are these?
- HIL. I am that Prince Hilarion to whom
20 Your Princess is betrothed. I come to claim
Her plighted love. Your brother, Florian,
And Cyril come to see me safely through.
- PSY. The Prince Hilarion? Cyril too? How strange!
My earliest playfellows!
- 25 HIL. Why, let me look!
Are you that learned little Psyche who
At school alarmed her mates because she called
A buttercup "ranunculus bulbosus"?
- 30 CYR. Are you indeed that Lady Psyche, who
At children's parties, drove the conjuror wild,
Explaining all his tricks before he did them?
- HIL. Are you that learned little Psyche, who
At dinner parties, brought in to dessert,
Would tackle visitors with "You don't know
35 Who first determined longitude – I do –
Hipparchus 'twas – B. C. one sixty-three!"
Are you indeed that small phenomenon?
- PSY. That small phenomenon indeed am I!
But gentlemen, 'tis death to enter here:
40 We have all promised to renounce mankind!
- FLOR. Renounce mankind? On what ground do you base
This senseless resolution?
- PSY. Senseless? No.
We are all taught, and, being taught, believe
45 That Man, sprung from an Ape, is Ape at heart.
- CYR. That's rather strong.
- PSY. The truth is always strong!